

"String and rope are twined by the women from the inner bark of the ambaibo tree. The tree is usually cut down by the men, who remove the outer bark in strips, pull the inner bark from them, and carry this back to camp. It is then thoroughly chewed by the women and placed on a stick over the fire to dry. The resulting shreds are twined into bowstrings, hammock strings, hammock ropes, and baby slings.

One of the most time-consuming activities of the women is the spinning of cotton thread (nínju). The spindle is made by the men from chonta palm. It is planed into shape with a mussel shell. It is more or less circular in cross section and about a half inch in diameter at the middle; it is pointed at both ends and is about 3 feet long. The whorl consists of a disk of wood or baked clay which is put on the spindle from the bottom end.

The women prepare the cotton for spinning. The balls of cotton are first collected from the plant and then pulled apart and flattened into paper-thin sheets about 6 inches square from which the impurities are picked out. The cotton is then ready for spinning. During this process the woman is seated, usually in the hammock. The squares of unspun cotton rest on one thigh (a distaff is not employed) and the spindle on the other, with the whorl end resting on the ground at an angle of about 60°. The woman pulls a thread-like line of cotton from one of her squares, attaches it to the spindle, and spins it into thread by rolling the spindle on the thigh from the hip to the knee. As the thread

1: Holmberg--11 [4]
116, 283, 462

(1941-42) 1950

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accumulates, it is rolled around the bottom of the spindle. Cotton thread is employed extensively in arrow making, for wrist guards, in twining baby slings, and in decorating the body on festive occasions. It is generally coated with uruku, a red paint made from the seeds of Bixa orellana. "

1: Holmberg--13 [2]

116, 462, 323, 283

(1941-42) 1950

Siriono

"Circular spindle whorls are sometimes made by women from small disks of clay hardened in the open fire as a pipe or a pot is. Before they are baked they are fitted on to the spindle so that the hole in the whorl will be of proper size."

3: Métraux--112-113

(no date) 1942

Siriono

116, 283, 413

"Spinning and weaving. — Siriono women made thin even cotton thread with spindles provided with pottery whorls. The spindles, [113] 4 feet (1.2 m.) long with whorls 4 inches (10 cm.) in diameter, were quite exceptional and not, as Wegner stated, typical of the tribe. The spindle was set in motion with the fingers and then dropped."

4: Ryden--49
116, 352, 513, 283

(1939) 1941

Siriono

"The only "fixture" attached to the Siriono hut consists of the hammock. This is made of cords spun from the bast of a tree, known to the Sirion as imbei, its Spanish names being bibosi, ambaibo or palo santo."

"Hammock-netting--the hammock is called kisa--is woman's work. In the preliminary making of the cords for a hammock, the woman puts a few fibres between her teeth, and twines the free ends with thumb and forefinger while [50] at the same time twisting them together. A hammock cord of that kind, ready begun, is seen in fig. 60 D. [MPK not reproduced for this file.] More fibres are joined to these two free ends as the work goes on. The finished cord is S-twisted, while its two component strands are z-twisted (1)).

1. In s-spun or s-twisted string the individual fibres run in the same direction as the diagonal line in the letter s, the thread being held in vertical position. When the fibres run in opposite direction the string is z-spun. In the work on the spinning of the south American Indians written by FRÖDIN and NOR-DESKIÖLD (1918) quoted below, s-spun thread is named right-spun and z-spun left-spun (cf. MONTELL 1941, p. 112).

Preparatory to the making of the hammock, the finished cords are rubbed with a wax-like substance, called iriti, a compound of wax, a little honey, and the juice of a plant known as edei, but the exact procedure I have never had an opportunity of witnessing although I think it probable that the waxlike compound is applied in a warm state. When this impregnation has been carried out, the cords are fairly stiff, smooth, and of a shiny blackness."

"Cotton-spinning--like pottery--among the Siriono is exclusively women's work. The Sirion use spindles of remarkably large size. Two of these, known as nifū, are reproduced here, fig. 43, B and C. The spindle-rod tapers towards each extremity. The whorl, which is of wood or earthenware, is small in relation to the spindle and passed over the bottom end of the spindle. On the spindle B, the whorl is of wood, and its four-sided shape is probably in this case due to the nature of the material. This latter shape of spindle-whorl also occurs among the Mosetene Indians (FRÖDIN and NORDENSKIÖLD 1918, fig. 5b). In spindle C the whorl is of earthenware and practically spherical. Disk-shaped spindle-whorls of earthenware also occur."

"The cotton fibre to be spun into thread is carded out with the hands into an elongated roll which during the operation is allowed to hang down freely from the right hand, or wound [87] round the right forearm or wrist. The spinning is done in sitting posture. The upper part of the spindle is rested against the outer side of the left thigh, and its point stood on the ground, fig. 42. The spindle is given a rolling motion by sliding the left palm against the thigh in the direction of the knee."

"The twined cords from the Siriono that these authors [MPK: Frödin and Nordenskiöld] have examined, all show that with that tribe all twisting is done clockwise--the thread is s-spun. This agrees with what I myself have been able to ascertain from examination of, e.g., the bow-strings made of twisted fibre. With caertain [MPK: sic] modification, however. As will be seen from the hammock-cord ready begun, fig. 60 D [MPK: not reproduced for this file] in this case the finished section of the cord is s-twisted, while its two strands are z-twisted, which is natural here, being a prerequisite to joining the two strands into one cord. The same modification applies to the bow-strings, with the exception that these are three-stranded. Unfortunately I do not know the method by which the three strands are twisted together."

"On two of the spindles collected, the thread remaining on them is z-twisted, and the thread on which the woman is spinning in fig. 42 [MPK: not reproduced for this file] must also be z-twisted, seeing that the woman is twisting it against her left thigh. If it had been against the right, the thread would have been s-twisted, provided the strokes of the hand were, according to general usage, made in the direction of the knee. A similar posture in spinning is adopted by a woman seen in one of the pictures in NORDENSKIÖLD'S (1931) work on the Siriono Indians. Examination of the arrows in my collection reveals, however, that the thread forming the lashings on them is s-twisted. This thread is, however, notwithstanding its thinness twined of two strands, each z-twisted. Z-twining is thus fundamental with the Siriono, even though the finished article shows s-twining by reason of its being composed of two or three z-twisted parts. The thread remaining on the two spindles must therefore have been intended to be twined into a thicker thread. It would therefore seem as if in this respect the Siriono to some extent differ from the remainder of the eastern Bolivian tribes, seeing that FRÖDIN and NORDENSKIÖLD (1918, map 3) ascribe s-twisting to the latter."

5: Radwan--294-295
116, 142, 283, 291, 301

T-3

(1928?) 1928

Siriono

The Siriono go completely naked. Their skin is copper brown; a member of this group appeared to be almost white. But on closer examination the colour showed itself to be light yellow. The women wear necklaces as ornaments; both sexes decorate their hair with feathers. [295] Above the elbows and below the knees, they wear cords. The men protect their wrist with a binding of similar cord against the returning bow string when releasing the arrow.